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C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 001198

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HQ SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD
TREASURY FOR MKACZMAREK
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USDOC FOR 4332 MAC/ITA/WH/JLAO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/14/2019

TAGS: [ECON](#) [EFIN](#) [EIND](#) [EINV](#) [EMIN](#) [ENRG](#) [EPET](#) [VE](#)

SUBJECT: EARTHQUAKE STRIKES VENEZUELA, BUT CHAVEZ DOESN'T
JUMP

Classified By: Economic Counselor Darnall Steuart for reasons 1.4 (b)
and (d).

11. (U) On September 12, a 6.2 magnitude earthquake struck the coast of Venezuela at approximately 3:36 PM local time, according to the Venezuelan Seismological Foundation (FUNVISI). FUNVISI reported that the earthquake's epicenter was 100 kilometers west of Caracas, off the coast of Carabobo state. Francisco Garces, President of FUNVISI, told reporters that geologists expect additional earthquakes in the coming weeks as tectonic plates continue to adjust.

12. (U) Press reports indicate that the most extensive damage occurred in Falcon state. At a press conference on September 13, the National Director of Civil Protection, Luis Diaz Curbelo, said that 15 people were injured in Falcon, including one girl who jumped from her balcony. Interior Minister Tarek El Aissami told the press that the quake damaged 17 houses and two buildings there. Curbelo said FUNVISI planned to inspect the safety of buildings affected by the quake.

13. (U) Curbelo said no injuries had been reported in Caracas, although the earthquake damaged the dome of the National Pantheon. However, heavy rains in the capital on the same day dumped 45 to 60 liters of water per square meter on the city, according to newspaper reports, with flooding blocking off several neighborhoods and leaving some residents without water or electricity.

14. (U) During his Sunday "Hello, President" television and radio program, President Hugo Chavez acknowledged the strength of the earthquake and asked for God's continued assistance. "I didn't jump from the balcony, but it moved everything; the wood on the floor creaked," he said.
DUDDY